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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, January 8, 2008

Burnsville woman sentenced on federal sex trafficking charges.

The crime of human trafficking continues to be a priority with the United States Attorney's Office as a 19-year-old Burnsville woman was sentenced yesterday in Minneapolis for operating a prostitution operation with high school students, using a computer.

U.S. District Court Judge Patrick J. Schiltz sentenced Justine Alex Reisdorf to 60-months imprisonment, to be followed by a three-year term of supervised release. Reisdorf pleaded guilty on Sept. 12, 2007, to one count of use of an interstate facility to promote prostitution.

At the sentencing, Judge Schiltz commented that human trafficking of minors is a "truly awful crime" and "one of the worst crimes we see in the federal system." An aggravating factor, Judge Schiltz determined, was the fact that Reisdorf knew what she was doing to her friend. In sentencing Reisdorf, Judge Schiltz stated that Reisdorf must learn "that with serious crimes come serious consequences." He further noted that the sentence imposed must "deter others from engaging in trafficking of minors."

Reisdorf was indicted in August 2007 on one count of the sex trafficking of a minor and one count of using an interstate facility to promote prostitution. Her indictment alleges that between November 2006 and March 2007, Reisdorf operated a prostitution ring. Court documents stated that Reisdorf knowingly employed female students under the age of 18 from Minnesota School District 191 to serve as prostitutes for that business.

Reisdorf's operation was advertised on the Internet, specifically through listings on Craigslist.com. Those listings advertised both adult and minor prostitution services and displayed photographs of the females, along with available services and prices.

In April 2007, a subpoena was served on Craig's List, Inc., seeking the identity of the person who placed those listings, and police determined it was Reisdorf. During a search of Reisdorf's residence, police found items indicative of a prostitution operation, including names and telephone numbers.

The U.S. Department of Justice reports that an estimated 600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked annually across international borders for involuntary servitude or use in the sex trades. An estimated 14,500 to 17,500 are trafficked within the U.S. each year. According to the Justice Department, the Twin Cities metropolitan area is one of the 15 largest human trafficking centers in the nation.

This case was the result of an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Eagan Police Department. Assistant United States Attorney Erica H. MacDonald prosecuted the case.